

A Day In... Chicago

4/10/2026

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Chapter 1: Wrigley's Bitter Ninth

The April wind sliced through the ivy-covered walls of Wrigley Field like a cold knife, carrying the sharp tang of grilled onions from the vendors and the faint, metallic promise of rain. It was Friday, April 10, 2026, and the temperature clung stubbornly around fifty-two degrees under a sky streaked with high, thin clouds. Cal hunched deeper into his faded Cubs hoodie, breath fogging as the ninth inning unfolded.

Shota Imanaga had been a revelation—carrying a no-hitter into the sixth like a prayer the whole ballpark had whispered together. The crowd had risen in waves of hope, blue jerseys swaying like Lake Michigan on a restless day. But the Pirates had answered with quiet, clinical hits, and by the final out the Cubs were shut out. “They fought the good fight,” Cal muttered, voice raw from cheering. He stood slowly, knees stiff from the wooden bleachers, and joined the quiet exodus of fans filing toward the exits, shoulders slumped under the weight of another close-but-not-close-enough afternoon.

Chapter 2: Serendipity in the Stands

Betsy was weaving through the thinning crowd outside the ballpark when she spotted Cal's familiar lumbering gait. “Tough one, huh?” she called, falling into step beside him. The two had known each other from the neighborhood for years—Cal the die-hard sports guy, Betsy the one who always had a gallery invite in her pocket. They traded quick jabs about Imanaga's near-miss and the Bulls' upcoming game against the Orlando Magic that night at the United Center.

“Seven o'clock tip-off,” Cal said. Betsy's eyes lit up. “I'm heading over to EXPO CHICAGO at Navy Pier after this—over a hundred and thirty galleries from around the world, talks, installations, the whole works. You should see the light installations they have this year; they glow like the city skyline at dusk.” Cal grinned despite the loss.

“Tell you what—meet me at our usual spot, the corner bar on Clark. We'll watch the Bulls together. Layers, though,” he added, glancing at the darkening clouds. “It's dropping into the thirties later.” They sealed it with a quick fist bump and parted ways, Betsy turning toward the lakefront while Cal hailed a ride.

Chapter 3: Reporting the Pulse

Near Navy Pier, where the wind off the water tugged at colorful banners and the hum of conversation mixed with the distant blast of a tour boat horn, MaryAnn stood with her microphone, earpiece crackling. The EXPO CHICAGO crowds swirled behind her—people in wool coats and scarves drifting between white tents filled with vibrant canvases and sculptural shadows. She spotted Betsy

emerging from the main hall and waved her over for a quick hello.

“Hey! Sorry we couldn’t squeeze in that Jonathan Butler show at City Winery or any of the smaller events tonight,” MaryAnn said, genuine regret in her voice. “The desk has us chasing everything at once.” They chatted for thirty seconds about the art fair’s electric energy before MaryAnn stepped back into her professional stance. Camera rolling, she delivered her piece with the practiced cadence of someone who loved her city’s contradictions: the City Council vote looming on officers with extremist ties, the steady drumbeat of local conversations around crime, the economy, and migrant challenges.

She wove in the pride of Chicago-born Pope Leo XIV—first American pontiff—meeting world leaders like Macron and calling for peace amid U.S.-Iran tensions. “And for those heading to the Expo or the United Center tonight,” she added, “expect normal Friday traffic with some congestion around Wrigley and the Pier. Daytime highs stayed in the low fifties, but lows will dip into the upper thirties. Dress in layers, Chicago.”

She wrapped, sent the file to Jonathon with a quick note about the forecast tie-in, and exhaled, watching the lake glitter under the clouds.

Chapter 4: Lights, Camera, Nightcap

Back in the warm glow of the studio, Jonathon reviewed MaryAnn’s footage on his monitor, the city’s skyline twinkling through the window behind him. He layered in the final weather details—partly cloudy, light winds, chance of showers—and prepped the evening wrap. Across town, the neighborhood bar on Clark was filling up with Friday-night energy: clinking glasses, the low murmur of conversation, and the bright blue-and-red flicker of the TV tuned to the Bulls pre-game.

Cal and Betsy had claimed their usual high-top near the window. Beers in hand, they toasted the day—Cal still grumbling good-naturedly about the Cubs, Betsy describing a particular installation at the Expo that had made her feel like the city itself was breathing. The Bulls took the floor against the Magic at seven, the United Center crowd roaring through the speakers. Midway through the first quarter, the news cut in: MaryAnn’s report flashed across the screen, followed by Jonathon’s smooth sign-off. “Thank you everyone for spending the evening with us,” he said, smiling into the camera. “Stay warm out there.”

In the bar, Cal and Betsy laughed as the game resumed, the day’s threads—baseball heartbreak, lakefront art, hard city questions, and one American pope calling for peace—all weaving together under the soft lights of a Chicago Friday night. Outside, the first light rain began to fall, gentle against the windows, promising a cool, layered evening ahead.